Railway projects in the North Eastern region

*103. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the length of railways in the whole of the country and that in the North-Eastern States;

(b) the length of the broad-gauge and metre-gauge railway lines in the different States of the country;

(c) the details of status of gauge conversion in the North-Eastern States; and

(d) the status of construction of new lines in the North-Eastern States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) The total length (route kilometres) of railway lines in Indian Railways as on 31.03.2007 is 63,327 kilometres. Of this, the North Eastern Region accounts for 2,365 kilometres.

(b) The State-wise and gauge-wise railway lines (route kilometres) of the country as on 31.3.2007 are given below:–

Sl. No.	Name of State/Union Territory	Route kilometres as on 31.03.2007			
		B G	M G	N G	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andhra Pradesh	4903.92	267.68	0	5171.60
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	0	1.26	0	1.26
3.	Assam	1226.59	1057.12	0	2283.71
4.	Bihar	2376.04	1034.95	0	3410.99
5.	Chhattisgarh	1097.01	0	88.46	1185.47
6.	Delhi	182.48	0	0	182.48
7.	Goa	69.00	0	0	69.00
8.	Gujarat	3100.01	1421.90	786.67	5308.58
9.	Haryana	1275.22	261.75	3.41	1540.38
10.	Himachal Pradesh	39.23	0	245.78	285.01
11.	Jammu & Kashmir	137.77	0	0	137.77
12	Jharkhand	1941.33	0	0	1941.33
13.	Karnataka	2759.54	246.29	0	3005.83
14.	Kerala	933.31	116.89	0	1050.20
15.	Madhya Pradesh	3829.85	345.97	708.08	4883.90
16.	Maharashtra	4473.64	312.63	733.01	5519.28
17.	Manipur	0	1.35	0	1.35
18.	Meghalaya	0	0	0	0
19.	Mizoram	0	1.50	0	1.50
20.	Nagaland	11.13	1.72	0	12.85
21.	Orissa	2246.92	0	0	2246.92
22.	Punjab	2121.75	0	11.66	2133.41

1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	Rajasthan	3840.87	1983.46	86.76	5911.09
24.	Sikkim	0	0	0	0
25.	Tamil Nadu	2496.89	1624.20	0	4121.09
26.	Tripura	0	64.42	0	64.42
27	Uttar Pradesh	6994.59	1578.21	2.03	8574.83
28.	Uttaranchal	283.76	61.15	0	344.91
29.	West Bengal	3451.79	238.93	220.01	3910.73
Union Territory					
1.	Andaman & Nicobar	0	0	0	0
2.	Chandigarh	15.70	0	0	15.70
3.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0	0	0	0
4.	Daman & Diu	0	0	0	0
5.	Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0
6.	Pondicherry	11.10	0	0	11.10
	ALL INDIA	49819.44	10621.38	2885.87	63326.69

(c) and (d) The details alongwith status of gauge conversion and new lines in the North Eastern States is as under:–

(Rs. in crore)

Sl. No.	Name of the Project & State	Year of inclusion in budget	Km.	Latest anticipated cost	Exp. upto March 2008	Outlay 08-09	Status
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
New Line							
1.	Jiribam-Imphal Road (Tupul) (Manipur)	2003-04	97.9	727	36.20	25	Final location survey completed for 68 km. length. 95 hectare land taken over from Government of Manipur. Earthwork and bridge works taken up in first 10 Km. length from Jiribam end. This has been declared as a National Project. Jiribam-Imphal Road (Tupul) targeted for completion by March, 2012. Further, extension to Imphal (27 Km.) is under process.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2.	Kumarghat-Agartala (Tripura)	1996-97	109	880	813.03	10	Work completed and commissioned on 05.10.2008.
3.	Azra-Byrnihat (Assam & Meghalaya)	2006-07	30	200	0.02	10	Final location survey has been taken up. There is resistance from the local people and they are wanting change of alignment in Assam portion. The matter has been taken up with Assam State Government. This has been declared as a National Project. Targeted for completion during 2014-15.
4.	Dimapur-Zubza (Kohima) (Nagaland)	2006-07	88	850	0.02	10	Contract for Final Location Survey awarded on 29.02.2008. This has been declared as a National Project. Targeted for completion during 2014-15.
5.	Bogibeel bridge with linking lines between Dibrugarh & North Bank line (Assam)	1997-98	73	1767	952.24	75	Land acquisition has been fully completed. The boulder supply for guide bund and protection works have almost been completed. The earthwork & bridge works are also in progress. The contract for main bridge sub-structure and guide bund on South bank with combined appro-ach embankment has been finalized. This has been declared as a National Project and targeted for completion by March 2012.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6.	Dudhnoi-Depa (Assam & Meghalaya)	1992-93	16	86.22	0.51	0.02	The Survey for alternative alignment from Dudhnoi to Mendhipathar as suggested by State Government has been completed. Joint survey for land acquisition completed and proposals for land acquisition have been submitted to State Government for Assam and Meghalaya portions.
7.	Harmuti-Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh & Assam)	1996-97	33	156	4.04	30	Final location survey and geo-technical investigation from Harmuti to Naharlagun (22 Km) completed. For Naharlagun to Itanagar (11 Km) final location survey is in progress. Contract for earthwork and bridges awarded on Harmuti-Naharlagun section. However, land is yet to be handed over by State Government of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The project is targeted for completion by March 2011 upto Naharlagun and March, 2012 upto Itanagar.
8.	New Moynaguri-Jogighopa (West Bengal & Assam)	2000-01	245	894	214.61	60	Land acquisition, earthwork, bridges taken up. Overall progress is about 24%.
9.	Agartala-Sabroom (Tripura)	2008-09	110	813.34	-	0.01	Final Location Survey taken up. This is a National Project. The project is tentatively targeted for completion by March, 2014.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10.	Bhairabi-Sairang (Mizoram)	2008-09	51.4	619.34	-	0.01	Final Location Survey taken up. This is a National Project.
Gauge Conversion							
1.	Lumding-Silchar-Jiribam and Badarpur to Kumarghat (Assam, Tripura & Manipur)	1996-97	368	1676	1180.75	135.95	The land acquisition has almost been completed Earthwork, bridge work, tunneling etc. are in various stages of progress. The progress of the project is adversely affected due to militant activities. This has been declared as National Project. Targeted for completion by March 2011.
2.	Rangiya-Murkongselek alongwith linked fingers (Assam & Arunachal Pradesh)	2003-04	510	915.7	6.15	50	This is a National Project. Earthwork, bridge work in Rangiya-Rangapara North (123 Km.) taken up. Targeted for completion by March 2012.
3.	Lumding-Dibrugarh including link branch lines of Haibargaon-Mairabari and Senchoa-Silghat (Assam & Nagaland)	1993-94	734	882	820.26	20	Main line and Senchoa-Silghat completed. Haibargaon-Mairabari (45 Km.) is targeted for completion by March, 2009.
4.	Katakhal-Bhairabi (Assam & Mizoram)	1997-98	84	88.70	25.05	15	Earthwork, bridge works etc. taken up. The conversion will be done alongwith Lumding-Silchar project by March, 2011.
5.	New Jalpaiguri-Siliguri-New Bongaigaon - Linked branch lines (West Bengal & Assam)	1997-98	419	892.83	855.25	25	All work completed except Fakiragram-Dhubri (66 Km.) which is likely to be completed during 2009-10. The progress on the project is getting adversely affected due to adverse law and, order conditions prevailing in the area.

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Sir, before raising the first supplementary, I must congratulate the hon. Minister of Railways, Laluji, and his colleagues for having extended the railway line up to Agartala. Agartala has got trains and the train services have begun there. I congratulate them, first of all, on behalf of the people of Tripura.

Sir, I have learnt from the reply given by the hon. Minister that the metre-gauge line in the North-East is about 50 per cent of the total railway line there, whereas in the entire country it is only 20 per cent. In the North-East it is about 50 per cent. Though there is some broad-gauge line in the North-East, the metre-gauge line will not serve the purpose. So, my first supplementary question is whether the Government of Assam has provided dedicated security for the purpose of gauge conversion of the railway line, whether there is any paucity of forces with the State Government and whether the State Government has sought more forces from the Central Government so that the gauge conversion will not be halted and it will be completed on schedule. This is my first supplementary.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, first of all, I am also thanking the hon. Member for extending his compliments to the Railway Ministry for having done so much for Tripura. I would also like to mention that, besides this, we have also sanctioned another 110 kilometres of new railway line which will be taken up in order to cover, ultimately, the distance up to Chittagong port. That being the case, we will definitely devote more attention to that line also because it is only recently that we have sanctioned Rs.813 crores for this section.

The other question was that 50 per cent of the railway line there is meter-gauge. I totally agree with him. But the overall scenario in the country is, we have about 50,000 kilometres of BG line, about 10,000 kilometres of MG line and about 3,000 kilometres of narrow gauge line. The point is, it is not our intention to keep the meter-gauge line as it is. The hon. Railway Minister, in an answer to a question, announced more than once in the Budget Session, that over a period of four to five years, during the Eleventh Year Plan, all these meter-gauge lines will be phased out. We will try to see that most of them are converted into BG lines. That being the case, this will also be done in the North East.

Then the hon. Member asked about the law and order situation. In fact, we are working in the North East Region in a very hostile and unfriendly atmosphere. We have lost nearly 53 personnel; both officers as well as RPF personnel and 12 others have got injured seriously. This has been happening there. When we asked for the security from the Government of Assam, at the first place, they said that they have to deploy the force for elections. Later on they said they would recruit 1,000 ex-servicemen. Ultimately, 601 persons have been recruited and for the rest they are asking for Home Guards. This is the situation in which we are working. In fact, the Government will have to necessarily step in and see to it that security is provided otherwise we cannot work....

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is to be addressed to the Government. Second supplementary.

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Sir, extension of railways from Agartala to Sabroom is yet to start. We have heard that the Railways is withdrawing its staff which has been engaged in the construction of railway line from Agartala to Sabroom. My request to the hon. Minister is, the work on this line should start immediately and no staff should be withdrawn.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, we have already drawn out a time bound programme. The final survey is now in progress and will be completed by October, 2009; land acquisition will be done by June, 2010, formation works will be done by 2013 and track linking will be done by 2014. It will definitely take five to six years. As I mentioned earlier, since we do not have sufficient official workforce, we are, necessarily, facing all these problems, but still doing the work. I assure the hon. Member that this period will be further shortened to four to five years and we will try our best to complete the work.

SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, will the hon. Minister be pleased to state as to what is the status of construction of new lines in the State of Sikkim?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, I visited Sikkim in compliance with the assurance that I made in this House. Afterwards, we came back and saw to it that the survey is completed. The proposal has been processed. Now a CCEA note has been sent. The railway line is in the advanced stage of sanction. This is the only State which does not have a railway line. Sir, a question was also asked whether the Minister is aware that there is one State in the country which does not have a railway line. At that point of time, I assured that this would be done. Now it is in the advanced stage. I will request the hon. Member to bear with us. We will definitely expedite the matter.

SHRI LALHMING LIANA: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is contemplating to connect all the State Capitals of the North East Region with the rest of the country by BG lines. If so, what is the present position? What is the targeted date for completion?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, as I mentioned earlier, Assam has already been connected. In the case of Tripura, as I have already said, Kumarghat-Agartala line has already been commissioned. In the case of Manipur and Imphal, we have already sanctioned the project. The hon. Prime Minister also visited that place. This will also be completed by 2012. As regards Arunachal Pradesh, the Final Location Survey is in progress to connect Itanagar. As regards Kohima, Nagaland, the Final Location Survey is being taken up. It is again a National Project. Between Dimapur and Kohima, 88 kms. of line has been sanctioned. Again, at Mizoram, the project covering 52 kms., between Bairabi and Sairang, has been sanctioned. It was already included in the last Budget. Again, it is a National project. Meghalaya is another State where we have now taken up the work between Guwahati and Byrnihat. Surveys have been sanctioned for further extension from Byrnihat to Shillong. About Sikkim, I have already said it. So, I had promised about all the eight States, and we are trying our best to connect them so that the people there get the required services, especially in the context of prevailing circumstances where the road transport has become quite costly.

SHRI B.J. PANDA: Sir, the statistics furnished by the hon. Minister makes it clear how shockingly the North-Eastern States have been neglected for the last 60 years. Even if you take into account the total track length in the country, which is to the extent of 63,000 kms., the North-Eastern States, leaving out Assam, put together, have less than 100 kms. of track length. What the

statistics do not show is that even if you consider all the other States, when you take into account the square kilometres of the States, that is, the track length per 100 sq. km., many other States also get a bad treatment from the Railway Ministry. My simple query to the hon. Minister is this. Does the Ministry have any measure of keeping track of equity among the various regions of the country? What is that measure? And how do you propose to bring about more equity in having railway tracks in various parts of the country?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, I quite agree with the hon. Member. However, I would state that the North-Eastern Region is better placed in terms of the route kilometres per lakh population. The all-India average is 6.16 km. per lakh of population, while in the North-East, it is 6.06. But, coming to the route per thousand square kilometres, it is falling short there because the all India average is 19.26 whereas, in the North-East, it is 9.06. The other supplementary which was raised by the hon. Member was: How are we trying to bring about equity in the matter of laying of railway tracks in various places? I would submit that over the years, whichever State had been quite influential, or, where they were able to make such attempts politically, or, where the Members of Parliament were very, very alert, they have been able to get the projects sanctioned...

SHRI B.J. PANDA: I compliment the hon. Minister for a very candid answer about how these things are done. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI R. VELU: Listen to me. That being the case, I would like to state for the information of this august House that 260 proposals have been sanctioned, but they are all in cold storage for want of finance.

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: सर ...(**व्यवधान**)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please don't interrupt. ...*(Interruptions)*... Let the Minister proceed with the answer.

SHRI R. VELU: I was submitting before this august House that equity will, definitely, be shown while considering each State with reference to demand and with reference to the needs. In fact, whenever any proposal comes, ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, kindly resume your places.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, I would like to submit that we will, definitely, take into account. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please don't interrupt.

SHRI R. VELU: I am only answering your supplementaries to make you understand better. In fact, today, we are not going strictly by the 14 per cent rate of return because we follow a social concept. This Government is an *aam admi* Government. We are trying to help each State. Even if it is not a viable proposition, we are sanctioning it, taking into account the demands of the common man who uses this mode of transport. As the hon. Member from Orissa has mentioned, we will take care to see to it that equity is given to each State.